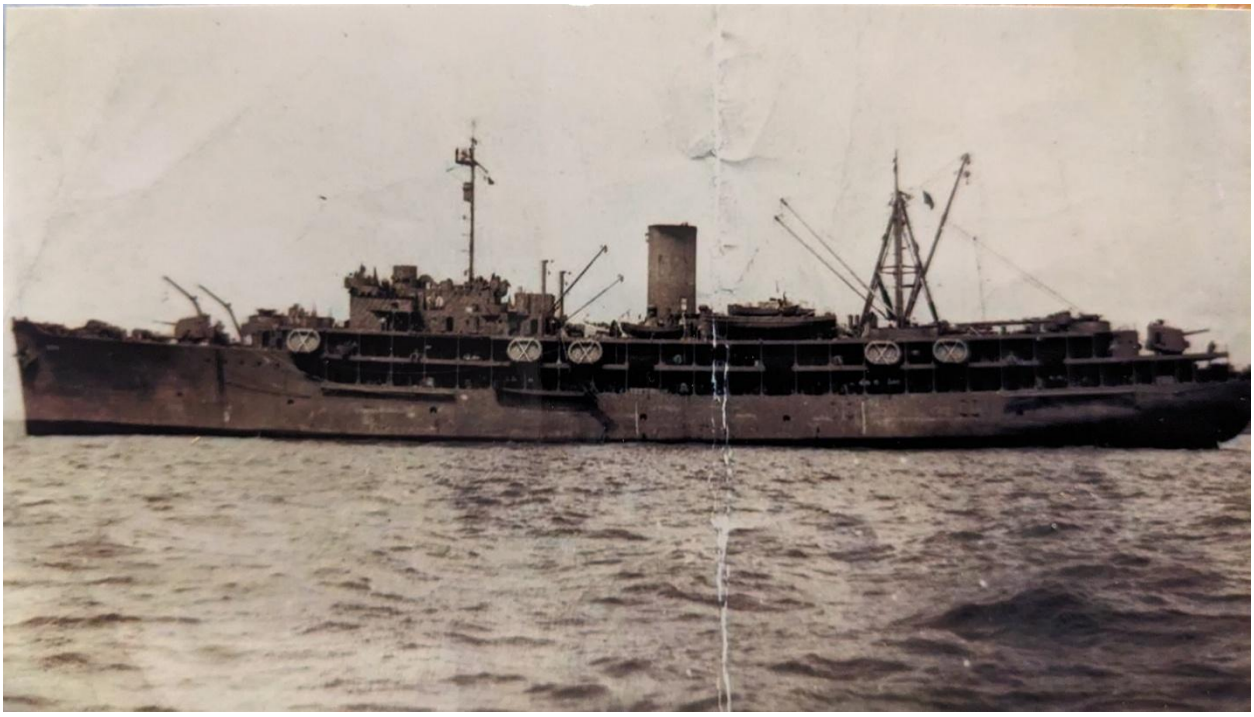
Raymond George “Ray” Christianson

Yokosuka, Japan

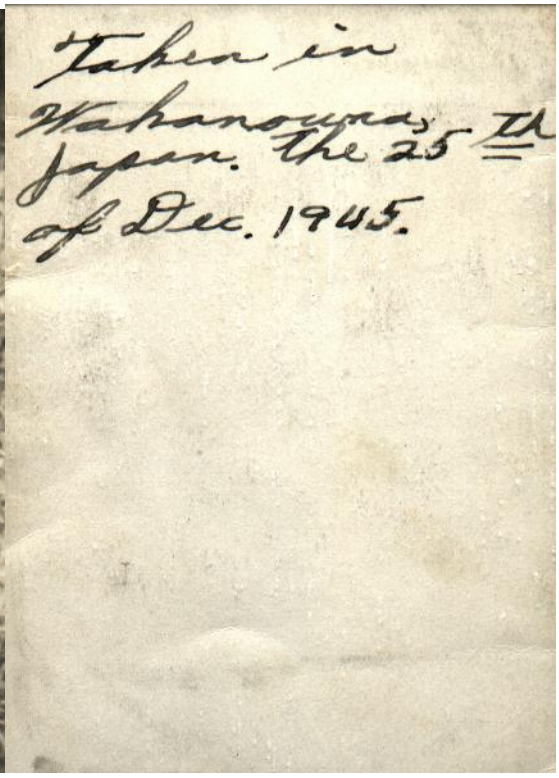
December 25th, 1945

Ray was the son of Hans Alfred and Olga Marie (Jakobsen) Christianson, immigrants from Norway to southern Minnesota. Ray was born February 8th, 1924, Freeborn County, Minnesota, marrying Lois Irene (Behr) in 1951. He passed away October 16th, 1986 in Albert Lea, Minnesota.

Ray joined the Navy during World War II and was assigned to the USS Cascade (AD-16), a destroyer tender operating in Japan directly following the end of the war supporting operations in the Tokyo Bay and Yokosuka area. The ship was identified from the following photograph by Todd Hintz.

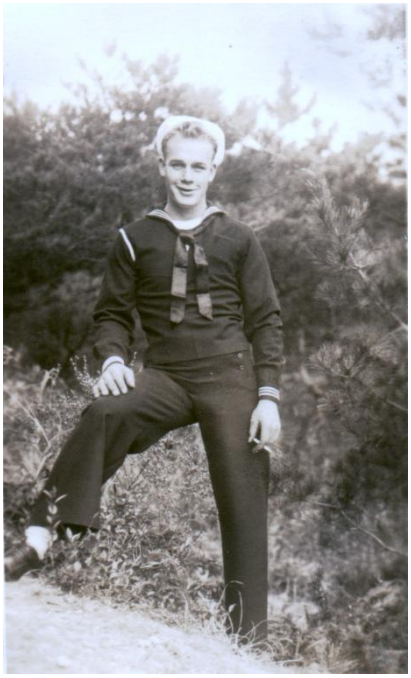


He took a series of photographs while on leave. Likely these were during Christmas in 1945. In January of 2026 Chat GPT was used to more specifically identify the locations in the photographs. GPT’s general analysis is summarized below.



The writing on the back of this photograph is mostly clear except for the place name. There is no Wakanoura, Japan. However, the date of December 25th, 1945 does place the remaining photographs to a particular time when the USS Cascade was stationed at Yokosuka, Japan.

The first pair of photographs below are Ray and a friend to his right, and Ray by himself.



The key to identifying the locations proved to be the photograph of a trolly. The trolly has a distinct shape and carries car number "303" on the front. Chat GPT identifies that as car 303 in the Enoden 300 series, built in the 1920s and in service in 1945. Enoden cars had a distinctive rounded front, single headlamp, and compact body – unlike Tokyo streetcars.

Also noted is the dense web of trolley wires and short-span poles characteristic of the Enoden line, which ran through narrow streets rather than wide urban avenues. This rules out Tokyo, Yokohama, and Osaka trams which used broader boulevards.

The landscape also features tracks embedded directly in the street and no tall commercial structures of Kamakura, which remained semi-rural and temple-oriented rather than industrial.

GPT also highlights the crowded line due to fuel shortages and demobilization of troops following the war.

Once the trolly was identified the picture of the temple gate can also be determined as Kenchō-ji Temple – Sanmon (Main Gate) 建長寺 山門, Kamakura, Japan. Although an exact match with this photo hasn't been made, a closeup photo on the Internet did have a similar gate with a white obelisk to the left, like that shown in Ray's photograph.

Chat GPT claims the temple is a short walk from the Kita-Kamakura Station on a direct and obvious route for visitors. Kenchō-ji was by far the most visited Zen temple by Allied servicemen in 1945-46. Kenchō-ji was rebuilt in 1775 and survived the war intact.

Note the trolley at the left in the next photograph, just above the water.

The trolley is the same model as the previous photograph and identifies the water feature as the Sakai River (境川), Katase–Koshigoe area. The town is Fujisawa / western Kamakura border. The Enoshima Electric Railway (Enoden) runs through this area. The view is looking inland from the riverbank toward Katase village and low hills.

Another photo shows a coastline and appears to have been taken from a jetty. Based on the previous photographs, Chat GPT thinks the coastline of Zaimokuza Beach (材木座海岸)

in Kamakura, Kanagawa Prefecture is the best match, 35.3062° N, 139.5487° E. Google maps: https://maps.google.com/?q=35.306194,139.548693

With all the above in mind, Chat GPT identifies the following photograph as the U.S. Naval Base, Yokosuka, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan. The building is the officers and recreation club complex adjacent to the base swimming pool. Likely the photo dates to about late 1945-46.